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The Lineage of the English Bible

BY H. W. HOARE

IT may be doubted whether among those who take up an English Bible there are more than a few who realize what a long history lies behind the version at which they are looking, and how rich in interest that history is. Yet the subject is one which appeals to a wide circle, and for such of our readers as may be unfamiliar with it a few pages may not be thrown away in the endeavor to sketch in outline the literary pedigree of what is perhaps the most notable work in the world.

In severe strictness we can hardly carry our present printed Bible back beyond the Reformation. Its parent source, as we shall presently see, is Tyndale, and Tyndale's first New Testament dates from 1525, or the sixteenth year of the reign of King Henry VIII. Many revisions, including the author's own, have been made since then, both of his New Testament and of his uncompleted work on the Old; but so sound was his scholarship, so felicitous his diction, so majestic his rhythm, that something like four-fifths of his latest renderings still survive unaltered in our Old Testaments, and a yet higher proportion in our New.

But while we cannot too highly honor Tyndale as the true father of our English Bible, it would be wrong to forget that we had a complete hand-written Bible as early as the fourteenth century, and that the practically unbroken line of our translators carries us back for yet another six or seven hundred years to the days of the great monk of Jarrow, the Venerable Bede, the father, as Burke calls him, of English learning. Let our readers, then, allow their imagination to transport them for a brief space into the Anglo-Saxon England of the first few decades of the eighth century.

More than a hundred years, let us suppose, have gone by since Augustine landed his little company in Kent. Partly through their efforts, but to a far greater degree through the Celtic fervor of Aidan, and of the northern missions, the pagan settlers have been brought over to the faith of Christ. Moreover, this is England's second conversion. But just as British Christianity produced no Celtic Bible, so tradition can tell of no early English Bible. In other lands it had been otherwise. As long ago as the second century the Latin-speaking West had received the Scriptures in Latin, while, a little later on, the East had received them in Syriac. Why was the case different with the nations that arose out of the wreck of the Roman Empire, and, in particular, why was it different with these islands? The answer is, that although there were not wanting scholars like Bede, and saints like Aidan, the raw material upon which missionary monks had to work was coarse and rude. Outside the monasteries very few persons knew even how to read. Life for

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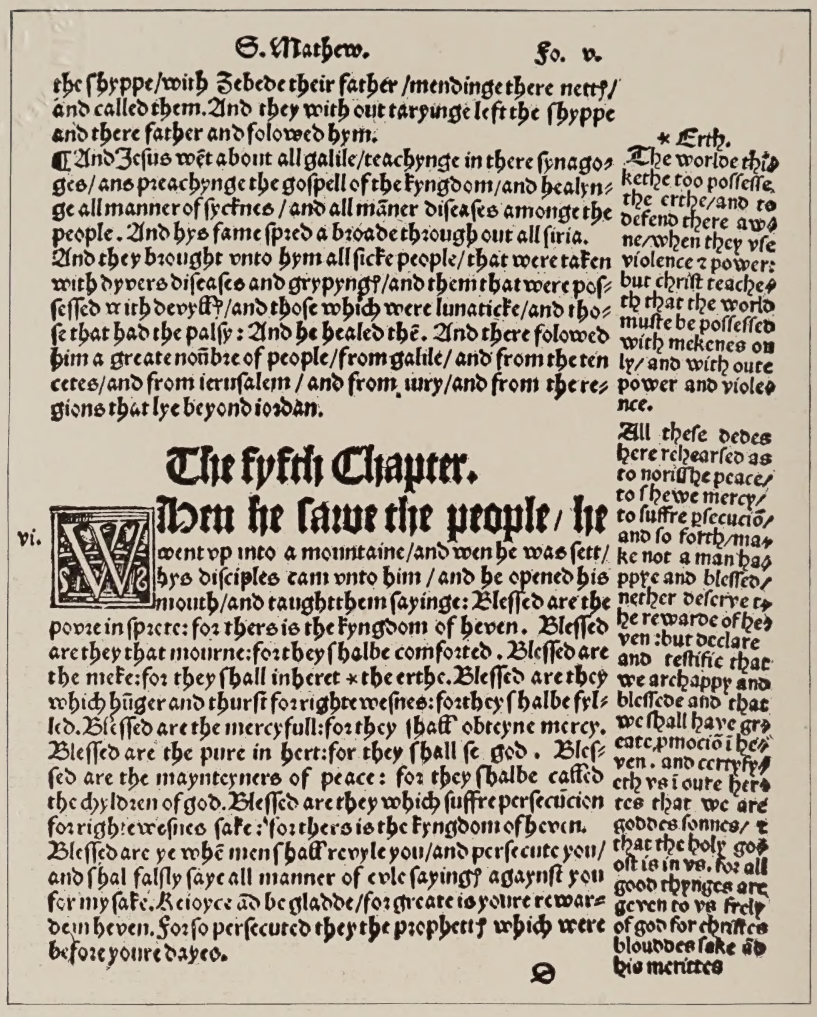


S. Mathew. Fo. v.

the shyppe/with Zebede their father/mendinge there nettes/ and called them. And they with out taryinge left the shyppe and there father and folowed hym.

¶ And Jesus wet about all galile/teachynge in there synagoges/ans preachynge the gospell of the kyngdom/and healynge all manner of sycknes/and all māner diseases amonge the people. And hys fame spred a broade throughout all siria. And they brought vnto hym all sicke people/that were taken with dyvers diseases and grypyngs/and them that were possessed with devyls/and those which were lunaticke/and those that had the palsy: And he healed thē. And there folowed him a greate noūbre of people/from galile/and from the tenceres/and from ierusalem/and from iury/and from the regions that lye beyond iordan.

* Erth. The worlde thynkethe too possesse the erthe/and to defend there awne/when they vse violence & power: but christ teacheth that the world muste be possessed with mekenes only/and with oute power and violence.

The fyfth Chapter.

vi. When he sawe the people/ he went vp into a mountaine/and wen he was sett/ hys disciples cam vnto him/and he opened his mouth/and taught them sayinge: Blessed are the povre in spirite: for thers is the kyngdom of heven. Blessed are they that mourne: for they shalbe comforted. Blessed are the meke: for they shall inheret * the erthe. Blessed are they which hūger and thurst for righte wesnes: for they shalbe fylled. Blessed are the mercyfull: for they shall obteyne mercy. Blessed are the pure in hert: for they shall se god. Blessed are the maynteyners of peace: for they shalbe called the dyldren of god. Blessed are they which suffre persecucion for righte wesnes sake: for thers is the kyngdom of heven. Blessed are ye whē men shall revyle you/and persecute you/ and shal falsly saye all manner of evle sayings agaynst you for my sake. Reioyce ād be gladde/for greate is youre rewarde in heven. For so persecuted they the prophets which were before youre dayes.

All these dedes here rehearsed as to norisshe peace/ to shewe mercy/ to suffre psecucio/ and so forth/make not a man happye and blessed/ nether deserve the rewarde of heven: but declare and testifie that we arehappy and blessede and that we shall have greate pmocio i heven. and certyfyeth vs i oure hertes that we are goddes sonnes/ & that the holy goost is in vs. for all good thynges are geven to vs frely of god for christes blouddes sake ād his merittes

SPECIMEN PAGE FROM TYNDALE'S BIBLE

our Saxon forefathers meant for the most part the battle and the chase, the bowl and the banquet. Savage and ignorant, they had to be taught the first elements of self-discipline and self-restraint before a written Bible could be of any benefit to them. In the long preliminary task which was pressing for accomplishment book-learning found no place.

While this preparatory labor of moral training and of organization was going on, the modest requirements of converts, whether clerical or lay, were met by renderings into the native tongue of such portions of the Latin Bible and liturgy as were in most familiar use. Bede eagerly encouraged such versions of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Commandments, and the last moments of his busy life were devoted to completing a translation of the fourth Gospel. In like manner Abbot Aelfric vernacularized the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Esther, Judith, and the two books of Maccabees. "*I have englished this* (Judith) *for your example,*" he says to Ethelward, "*that you also may defend your country against foreign hosts.*" In frequent use, too, were various metrical versions of incidents in the Bible story, and "glosses" of psalm and gospel in which each line of the Latin original had its Anglo-Saxon equivalent inserted underneath it.

This much, then, for such fragmentary anticipations as we find of the translation which as yet was in the distant future. It is not, however, to any dumb parchments that we must look for the operative Bible of those semi-pagan days. That lay elsewhere. It lay in the living voice of the popular minstrels, in the power of pure and self-sacrificing Christian lives, in the sacred pictures which through the ministry of religious art spoke to the worshipper from the altar and the walls of his country church. It was Cædmon's rude poetry that was the earliest instructor of Northumbria, while, in the south, we read how Abbot Aldhelm chose the disguise of a bard in order that he might beguile wayfarers on the bridge by Malmesbury with his singing, and teach them at the same time. Songs, he found, were incomparably more attractive than sermons.

From Saxon England let us now spirit ourselves into the closing years of the fourteenth century. The devastations of the Dane have long been forgotten. The conquering Norman has at last been naturalized and assimilated. Latin of course is still the language of church and university, but the old home speech, bearing the marks of its long struggle with the invader, is fast winning its way as a literary dialect, and making ready for its public baptism by Chaucer. Feudal England is settling down into an independent nationality, and the mediæval sway of the "World-Monarch" and of the "World-Priest" is being weakened on every side. The age is restless, dissatisfied, and feverish, and we seem to catch a reflection of its spirit in a figure which stands out head and shoulders above the crowd. It is the figure of John Wycliffe, well called "the last of the Schoolmen and the first of the Reformers."

Marked out among his brother theologians by his conviction that the Bible ranked far above all the traditions of the schools, Wycliffe was surnamed the "evangelical" Doctor. He looked to the simplicity of the gospel message for a reformation of conduct, and his object was to effect a complete translation of the Latin Bible, and to spread a knowledge of it among the common people by an organization of trained missionary preachers. This object he achieved, but a question has of late years been raised by Father Gasquet whether the English versions which have come down to us are really the versions made by the Reformer and his friends. Father Gasquet contends that they were the work of Wycliffe's life-long antagonists, the bishops, and that the Wycliffe translation has been lost. All that can be said here is that the balance of expert opinion is against this contention, and that in the great edition of 1850 by Forshal and Madden we possess just what we have hitherto believed ourselves to possess, namely, an

WILLIAM TYNDALE
After an engraving by W. Humphrys

English Bible of 1382, partly from the hand of Wycliffe and partly by Nicholas of Hereford, and also an English Bible of 1388, which is not an independent version, but a revision of the earlier one, by John Purvey, Wycliffe's curate at Lutterworth.

To us, we confess, it appears very improbable that if Wycliffe and his friends had known of any previously existing translation they would have remained silent on the subject, especially if the translation had been made by the Church. For the head and front of their offence was that they were introducing a *pernicious innovation,* and casting pearls before swine. Moreover, Wycliffe does in his writings refer to a previous version, but then it was not an English version. "As lords in England," he says, "have the Bible *in French,* so it were not against reason that they hadden the same in English."

The chief points of general interest about these Bibles are the following:

(1) They are not from the Hebrew and Greek, but from the Latin.

(2) They are anonymous, which suggests a fear of the ecclesiastical authorities.

(3) They are coincident with the development of the native speech into a literary dialect, with the moral decadence of the papacy, and with the growing sense of nationality.

(4) They spread abroad and helped to keep alive the idea of a people's Bible in the people's English.

(5) They point to Wycliffe's earnest desire to purify the gross corruptions of church and state in his day, and to lay stress on the primary religious importance of a Christian life lived in the love and fear of God.

(6) Though divided into chapters, they are not divided into verses. This latter division dates only from the sixteenth century. It was introduced into England with the Genevan Bible.

Lastly, we feel a sort of kinship with these old Bibles when we remember that some of their phrases still survive. Among such phrases are *"the beam and the mote," "the deep things of God," "the cup of blessing which we bless," "the strait gate."* Their rendering of part of the "Magnificat" is as follows:

> And Mary seyde: My soul magnifieth the Lord, and my spiryt hath gladid in God myn helthe. For he hath beholden the mekeness of his handmayde. Loo! forsooth of this alle generations shulen seye me blessid. For he that is mighti hath done grete thingis to me, and his name is holy.

We pass on to the Reformation period, and to the printing of a New Testament in English by William Tyndale, the scholar to whose heroism, devotion, and genius we owe so great a debt.

Two great events influence this epoch. The one is the revival of letters, carrying with it the eager study of Hebrew and Greek. The other is the invention of paper and of printing. Translators could now go back to the original languages of Scripture, and a check was imposed on those many unavoidable errors which creep into a hand-transmitted text. That which had been the toil of months and years became the work of a few days or hours, that which had been costly became cheap, and that which had circulated sluggishly from hand to hand was scattered broadcast among a newly formed reading public.

For under the Tudors, and owing to the operation of economic and commercial causes, the urban middle class was on the increase, and this class became full of growing eagerness for a national Bible. The Wycliffe Bibles had been rendered antiquated by changes in the language, and even in their own day had been only of secondary authority as translations of a translation.

Bible study had strongly attracted Tyndale as far back as his Oxford days. Soon after he had left Oxford for Cambridge, Erasmus brought out his Latin translation of the New Testament, and thus challenged the hitherto accepted infallibility of the Vulgate. Four years later, in 1520, Luther burnt the Pope's Bull. In 1521 he was condemned at the Diet of Worms. In 1522 appeared his German Testament. It would have been strange if Tyndale's wish for an English version had not been intensified by the electrical shock of these events. It became the passion of his life. Accordingly in 1523 he sought a home in London, hoping in due season to publish there. But Bishop Tunstall, to whom he applied, turned him adrift, and it needed

JOHN WYCLIFFE
After an engraving by C. White

but a few months' experience to convince him that, under existing circumstances, no English printer would dare to take up his business. Ecclesiastical hostility was much too strong. Nothing daunted, he embraced an exile's lot, and the imminent risk of being put to death, sooner than abandon his fixed purpose. By the spring of 1525 he had got ready in the press at Cologne a quarto edition of an English New Testament.

How a Roman spy informed against him, how he fled to Worms with his partially printed sheets, how, in spite of Wolsey's lynx-eyed inquisitors, two editions, one of quarto size with notes, and one of octavo size without notes, were smuggled into England in the early months of 1526, we have no space to tell here. Packed away in sacks of flour, in cloth bales, in any hiding-place which conveniently suggested itself, they contrived to reach their destination. But so vigorous was the search for them that of the many thousands which were distributed, there are now but three solitary survivors. Of the quarto we have but one mutilated fragment; of the octavo, only two copies.

Tyndale did not live to complete his

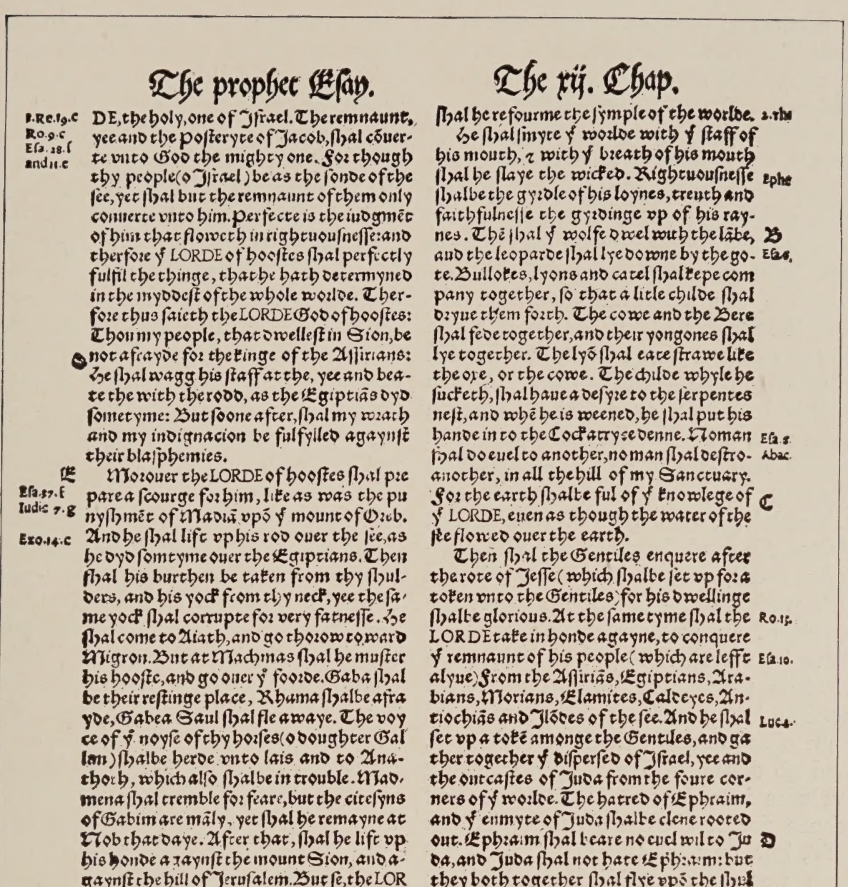
translation. By 1536 he had finished and published the whole of the New Testament, the Pentateuch, and the Book of Jonah. In addition to this he had by him, unpublished and in manuscript, nine additional books of the Old Testament (Joshua to II. Chronicles, inclusive). In May, 1535, he was arrested and thrown into prison; and on October 6, 1536, he was strangled, and his body burnt at the stake.

MILES COVERDALE
After an engraving by Thomas Trotter

A year before his martyrdom, and while he was in Vilvorde prison, a complete English Bible, by Miles Coverdale, who became a bishop under Edward VI., was published either at Antwerp or at Zürich. The date was October, 1535. Its origin is shrouded in uncertainty. We know, however, that Coverdale was chiefly resident on the Continent for some years before 1535, and we have his own candid admission that translation with him was no spontaneous impulse, but that he took it up at the urgent instance of patrons, and because Tyndale's career was plainly coming to an end. The patrons were Thomas Cromwell and Sir Thomas More. When Cromwell (whose Protestantism savored somewhat strongly of the cult of the rising sun) foresaw that the King's marriage with Anne would make strongly for the Protestant side, it is quite likely that he determined to anticipate any renewed call which might arise for an English Bible, and that he set Coverdale confidentially to work.

Thus far, then, we have introduced our readers to two Bibles which may be called the formative Bibles of the Reformation. They differ in more ways than one. Tyndale went straight to the Hebrew and Greek. Coverdale, but little versed in Hebrew, used the best Latin and German translations, and availed himself of Tyndale's translations. Coverdale's is a complete Bible. Tyndale had left Ezra to Malachi (except the Book of Jonah) untranslated. The one is first and foremost the scholar, and he displays all the scholar's severe conscientiousness and absorption in his task. The other is the artist; receptive, cosmopolitan, full of dexterity and resource. Tyndale's characteristics are strength and self-reliance; Coverdale's, gentleness and docility. The former was made to lead, the latter to follow. Coverdale could never have made a hero, nor Tyndale a courtier. As translators they both ring with the true note of literary distinction; both have the instinct of rhythm; both are alike lovers of homeliness and simplicity. Coverdale has beauties innumerable* of his own, but for accuracy, majesty, stateliness, and grandeur the palm must be awarded to Tyndale.

* We need only refer to the Prayer-Book version of the Psalms, which is nearly all his work, or to Isaiah in our Bibles. There, by a comparison with his revision in the Great Bible, his hand is sufficiently evident.



The prophet Esay. The xij. Chap.

DE, the holy, one of Israel. The remnaunt, yee and the posteryte of Jacob, shal cõuerte vnto God the mighty one. For though thy people (o Israel) be as the sonde of the see, yet shal but the remnaunt of them only converte vnto him. Perfecte is the iudgmẽt of him that floweth in righteousnesse: and therfore ỹ LORDE of hoostes shal perfectly fulfil the thinge, that he hath determyned in the myddest of the whole worlde. Therfore thus saieth the LORDE God of hoostes: Thou my people, that dwellest in Sion, be not afrayde for the kinge of the Assirians: he shal wagg his staff at the, yee and beate the with the rodd, as the Egiptiãs dyd sometyme: But soone after, shal my wrath and my indignacion be fulfylled agaynst their blasphemies.

Moreouer the LORDE of hoostes shal prepare a scourge for him, like as was the punyshmẽt of Madiã vpõ ỹ mount of Oreb. And he shal lift vp his rod ouer the see, as he dyd sometyme ouer the Egiptians. Then shal his burthen be taken from thy shulders, and his yock from thy neck, yee the same yock shal corrupte for very fatnesse. He shal come to Aiath, and go thorow toward Migron. But at Machmas shal he muster his hooste, and go ouer ỹ foorde. Gaba shal be their restinge place, Rhama shalbe afrayde, Gabea Saul shal fle awaye. The voyce of ỹ noyse of thy horses (o doughter Gallim) shalbe herde vnto Iais and to Anathoth, which also shalbe in trouble. Madmena shal tremble for feare, but the citesyns of Gabim are mãly, yet shal he remayne at Nob that daye. After that, shal he lift vp his honde a gaynst the mount Sion, and agaynst the hill of Jerusalem. But se, the LORde God of hoostes shal take awaye the prouide from thence, w' feare. He shal hew downe the pronde, and fel the hie mynded. The thornes of the wod shal be rooted out w' yron, and Libanus shal haue a mightie fal.

The xj. Chapter.

AFter this there shal come a rod forth of ỹ Kynrede of Jesse, and a blossome out of his rote. The spirite of the LORDE shal light vpon it: the spirite of wysdome, and vnderstondinge: the spirite of counsel, and strength: ỹ spirite of knowlege, and of the feare of God: and shal make him feruent in the feare of God. For he shal not gene sentẽce, after the thinge ỹ shal be brought before his eies, neither reproue a matter at the first hearinge: but with righteousnesse shal he iudge the poore, and with holynes shal he reforme the symple of the worlde. He shal smyte ỹ worlde with ỹ staff of his mouth, & with ỹ breath of his mouth shal he slaye the wicked. Righteousnesse shalbe the gyrdle of his loynes, trueth and faithfulnesse the gyrdinge vp of his raynes. Thẽ shal ỹ wolfe dwel with the lãbe, and the leoparde shal lye downe by the gote. Bullokes, lyons and catel shal kepe company together, so that a litle childe shal dryue them forth. The cowe and the Bere shal fede together, and their yongones shal lye together. The lyõ shal eate strawe like the oxe, or the cowe. The childe whyle he sucketh, shal haue a desyre to the serpentes nest, and whẽ he is weened, he shal put his hande in to the Cockatrysis denne. No man shal do euel to another, no man shal destroy another, in all the hill of my Sanctuary. For the earth shalbe ful of ỹ knowlege of ỹ LORDE, euen as though the water of the see flowed ouer the earth.

Then shal the Gentiles enquere after the rote of Jesse (which shalbe set vp for a token vnto the Gentiles) for his dwellinge shalbe glorious. At the same tyme shal the LORDE take in honde agayne, to conquere ỹ remnaunt of his people (which are lefte alyue) from the Assiriãs, Egiptians, Arabians, Morians, Elamites, Caldeyes, Antiochiãs and Jlõdes of the see. And he shal set vp a token amonge the Gentiles, and gather together ỹ dispersed of Israel, yee and the outcastes of Juda from the foure corners of ỹ worlde. The hatred of Ephraim, and ỹ enmyte of Juda shalbe clene rooted out. Ephraim shal beare no euel wil to Juda, and Juda shal not hate Ephraim: but they both together shal flye vpõ the shulders of the Philistynes toward the West, and spoyle them together that dwell toward the East. The Idumytes and the Moabites shal let their hõdes fall, and the Ammonites shalbe obedient vnto them.

The LORDE also shal cleue the tunges of the Egiptiãs see, and with a mightie wynde shal he lift vp his honde ouer Nilus, and shal smyte his seuẽ streames and make men go ouer drye shod. And thus shal he make a waye for his people, ỹ remayneth from the Assirians, like as it happened to ỹ Israelites, what tyme they departed out of the londe of Egipte.

The xij. Chapter.

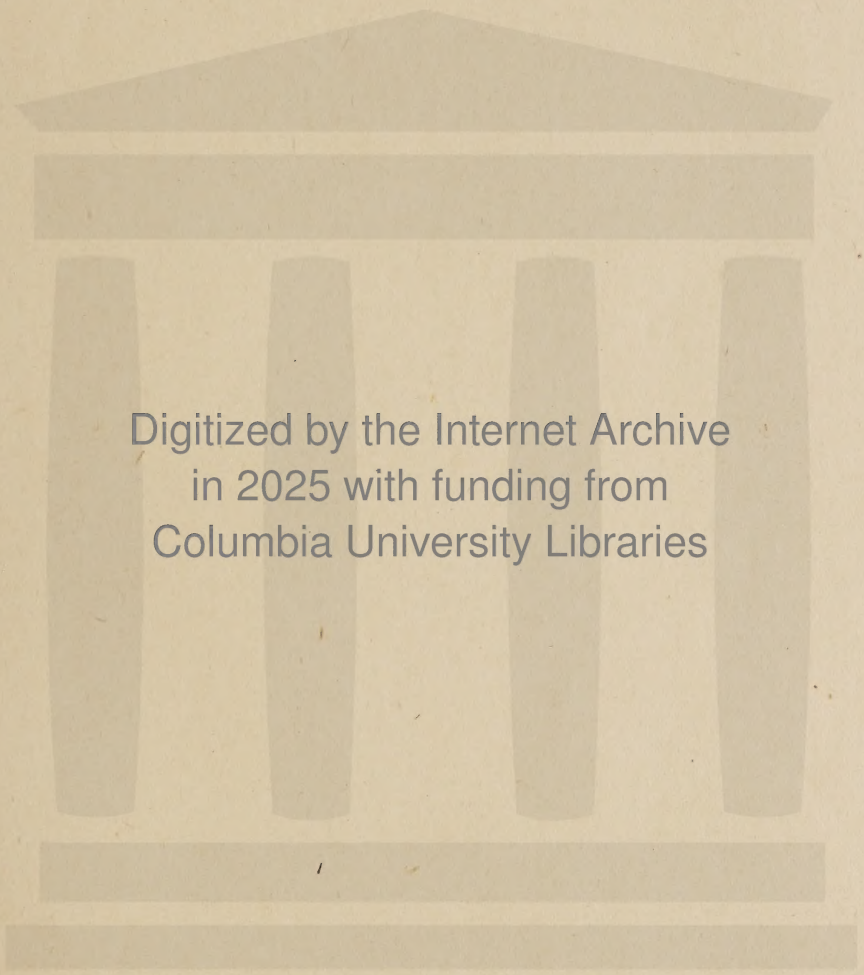
SO that then thou shalt saye: O LORDE, I thanke the, for thou wast displesed at me, but thou hast refrayned thy

Marg. refs: 2.Re.19.c; Ro.9.c; Esa.28.f and 11.c; Esa.27.f; Iudic 7.g; Exo.14.c; Mat.3.a; Esa.61.a; Luc.4.b and 7.c; 2.Thi; Ephe; B; Esa.65; Abac.; C; Ro.15.; Esa.10.; Luc.4.; D; Exo.14.

lated according to what he believed to be the best literal and grammatical sense, and in so doing had disregarded certain well-established and deeply venerated ecclesiastical terms, such as "grace," "charity," "priest," "penance." His version, accordingly, was denounced as untrustworthy, as a book tainted with the plague-spot of heresy, and deserving only of the flames. Not so with Coverdale. Doubtless he too was heart and soul on the side of the Reformation, but he was not notorious as an extreme man, and he did his utmost to be conciliatory. It was never his intention or desire to become a translator. If he carried out what Cromwell had enjoined on him, it was (as he tells us himself) because he saw that Tyndale, the prince of translators, was doomed, and because he was profoundly anxious that his cause should not die with him. He saw also that the prospects of an English Bible were now brighter by far than they had heretofore been. His translation, accordingly, had no need to be anonymous. Nay, more, it bore an obsequious dedication to Henry, framed no doubt with a view of floating the volume into favor. Cromwell failed to secure for it the royal authorization in 1536, but, on the other hand, the publication was never publicly prohibited; and when the edition of 1537 appeared, it was under the "*most gracious license*" of the Supreme Head.

We come now to the Bible which is the basis of all later work, the Bible from whose text, through the line of the Great Bible (1539), the Bishops' Bible (1568), and the King's Bible (1611), the revised versions of 1881 and 1885 are directly descended. The version to which we refer is dated 1537, and is known as Matthews' Bible. Like Coverdale's, this Bible was printed abroad; very probably in Antwerp, where Tyndale had been arrested, and it was dedicated by one "Thomas Matthews" (a feigned name) to Henry. Who Matthews may have been must remain quite uncertain. Perhaps he was a friendly merchant who paid the necessary printing expenses. The real author was John Rogers, who suffered martyrdom at Smithfield in 1555. Now Rogers had long been on terms of close friendship with Tyndale. He was also his literary executor, and his object at this juncture was twofold. In the first place he wished to perpetuate the whole of Tyndale's finished work. In the next place he wished to expand it, by incorporating a part of Coverdale's version into a complete Bible. Including the manuscript left in his hands, Rogers had of Tyndale's translation (1) the New Testament, (2) the Old Testament as far as II. Chronicles, (3) the book of Jonah. With this last exception the books from Ezra to Malachi still remained to be done. These books Rogers took therefore from the Coverdale Bible. Why he did not take Jonah from the Tyndale version one cannot say. Perhaps he could not procure a copy. At any rate he did take it from Coverdale, as Coverdale himself had taken it in great measure from Tyndale. In his editorial capacity he thus produced an amalgam, some two-thirds of which, if a broad view be taken, may be said to represent Tyndale, and the other third Coverdale. His folio contained a large mass of extraneous matter, and the margin was freely used for the inevitable "notes," some of which, after the fashion of the day, were offensively polemical. There was also a prefatory exhortation to the study of Scripture, which greatly delighted Cranmer. This Bible reached England about July, 1537. The Primate, who almost seems to have been expecting its arrival, at once sent a copy to Cromwell, begging him to persuade the King to license it, and within a very few days Cromwell, strange to say, had actually succeeded. Cranmer, who, when he heard it, exclaimed that the news was better than a present of £1000, must surely have known that this so-called "Matthews" was really (in great measure) Tyndale resuscitated. Yet church and state quietly conspire to impose the fraud upon a monarch of Henry's uncertain and volcanic temperament, and act out the solemn farce with all possible success. The whole transaction is indeed one of the standing curiosities of history.

Of one thing we may at any rate be tolerably sure. Neither the minister nor the Archbishop could have slept quietly in his bed while this Bible was being sold under the King's sanction. In the north the gathering storm against Cromwellism had already broken out. At any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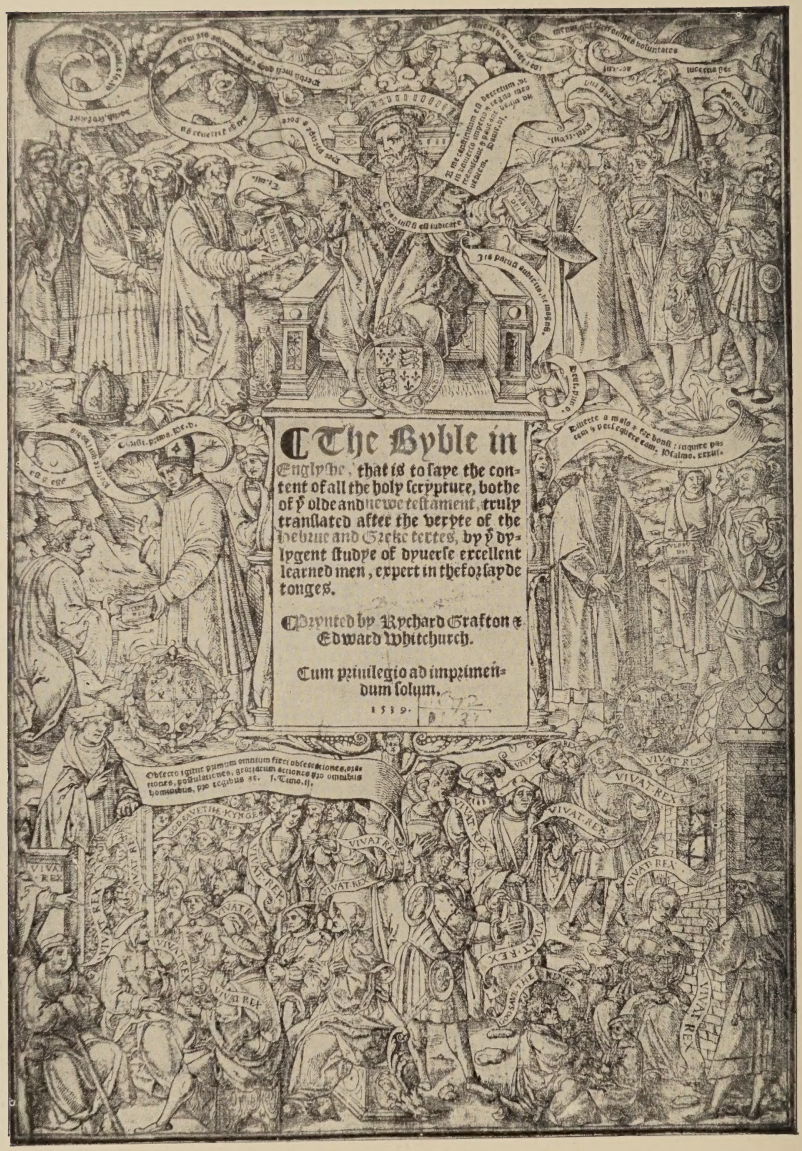
The Byble in
Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scrypture, bothe of ye olde and newe testament, truly translated after the verye of the Hebrue and Gr̃eke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges.
Prynted by Rychard Grafton & Edward Whitchurch.
Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.
1539.
VIVAT REX

TITLE-PAGE, DESIGNED BY HOLBEIN, FOR THE "GREAT BIBLE" (1539)

moment Henry might discover that he had been duped, and the scaffold might not improbably be the result. Cromwell lost no time in providing against the danger. In order so far as possible to cover up Tyndale's trail, and to efface the memory of Rogers's "notes," he instructed the indefatigable Coverdale to act as editor in the preparation of that famous revision which was to become known as "The Great Bible." No expense was to be spared in producing a typographical masterpiece which should drive all its rivals out of the field.

In the spring of 1538, Coverdale, Grafton the King's printer, and Regnault the French printer, set to work in Paris under a conditional license from Francis I. They had made fair progress, and had sent over some printed sheets to London, when on December 17 the Inquisitor General swooped down on them, and they sought safety in flight. But the "waste paper" as which their revision had been sold was craftily recovered. Presses, types, and workmen were carried over to England, and in April, 1539, the first edition of Cromwell's "*Great Bible*" made its appearance. A prominent feature in it was the engraving on the title-page from a design by Holbein. The picture deserves attentive study even if it be only as a piece of history. In the upper section the Saviour is represented in the clouds committing the "Word of Truth" to the King. Just below we see Henry, on his throne, transmitting the book, through Cranmer, to the clergy on his right, and, through Cromwell, to the lay peers on his left. A little lower come Cranmer and Cromwell again, while at the base is a preacher addressing a crowd of grateful and applauding subjects.

During 1540 and 1541 no less than six editions were published. For the second issue, of April, 1540, Cranmer wrote a Preface, and it is this which has caused this version to be so often called "Cranmer's Bible," whereas its originator was Cromwell, and its revising editor Coverdale. A later issue bears the notification that it was "oversene and perused" by Cuthbert of Duresme and Nicholas of Rochester. Now this Cuthbert was no other than the Bishop Tunstall who had turned Tyndale from his palace, and had burnt his New Testament at Paul's Cross. The martyr's dying prayer had been, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." How thankful and exultant would he have been could he have seen his work, embodied in this "Great Bible," receive the blessing of the ecclesiastical Vicegerent, of the Primate, and of the Bishop of London, and have watched it being set up in every parish church by the direct command of the "Defender of the Faith"!

Such, then, was the origin of Cromwell's Bible, which had a reign of nearly thirty years, whose renderings were adopted by our first Prayer-Book of 1549, and whose *Psalter* is specially retained, as set forth in a note prefixed to our prayer-books of to-day.

The various titles of the successive versions of our Bible tend somewhat to obscure a fact which it is the object of this little sketch to bring into relief. We hear of Tyndale's Bible, of Coverdale's, of Matthews', and the rest, and we naturally form an idea of them as independent books, not as correlated members of one organic whole. But it is one of the glories of our Bible that it has been a gradual national growth. The spell of the "divine library" has attracted one man after another, and one set of men after another, to its service. The idea of a Bible for the people, in the language neither of the court nor of the schools, but of the people themselves, seems to have originated with Wycliffe. Tyndale took up the idea and clothed it in imperishable glory. Coverdale, diffidently following in his footsteps, filled up his incompleteness. Thus the great lines were laid down forever. All subsequent work has been not retranslation, but revision, not the making of a new Bible, but the bettering of the old one. From Lutterworth to Westminster, from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth, this principle has prevailed — the principle, namely, of a popular Bible, in idiomatic English, conveying, so far as one language can represent another, the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek.

For the rest we must be very brief. The "Great Bible" marks a pause in the work of Bible-making. As early as October, 1536, the so-called "Pilgrimage of Grace," or revolt of the north of England, had showed that Cromwell was go-

ing too fast. The King turned upon him, and in July, 1540, he went to the block. The pendulum began to swing back towards the party of Gardiner, and no fresh revision was made till the reign of Elizabeth. During that reign the work was taken up again from three different quarters, namely, by the Puritan exiles, by the Roman Catholic exiles, and by the English bishops. The Puritans produced the Genevan Bible of 1560; the Roman Catholics, in 1582, the New Testament part of the Douai Bible, to which the Old Testament (held back only from want of funds) was added in 1610; and the Church of England the Bishops' Bible of 1568.

Both the Genevan Bible and the Douai Bible occupy a very important position in the history of our translations, but neither of them is, so to speak, in the direct line of succession, though no versions had more influence on the Authorized Version of 1611. The Bishops' Bible, on the other hand, is in the direct line. It is based on the Great Bible, to which Coverdale, as revising editor, devoted his best work, and is itself the basis of the King's Bible, as that in turn is of the Revised Version. Our readers may fairly ask, therefore, to have its origin explained.

This Church Bible was published under the guidance of Archbishop Parker, a fine scholar and a great advocate of uniformity. We may almost say that it was forced upon him by the situation in which the Church found itself. On the one side was the Great Bible, which was already becoming antiquated, while its editor, Coverdale, was but a poor Hebrew scholar, and had consequently been compelled to lean on the best translations that were to be had. Moreover, this new version was now seen to be greatly inferior to the Genevan Bible in accuracy and expression. Yet a Bible so redolent of Calvinism as the Genevan could not become the standard book of the Church. Either, then, there must be a confusing medley of authorities, or else the bishops must supersede all existing versions by a Bible in all respects worthy of church and state. It will thus be seen that the Bishops' Bible was an attempt by the Primate of the day, assisted by his episcopal brethren, to bring forward an edition which should bring order into chaos, and should take rank as *the* Bible of the land. The attempt failed. Borrowing from Geneva the excellent principle of co-operation, Parker was unsuccessful in carrying it into practice. The work done was of uneven merit, and it lacked unity of tone. The volume itself was too heavy, cumbersome, and costly for anything but liturgical use. In scholarship it was defective. Its ecclesiastical predecessor, the Great Bible, naturally gave place to it, but not so the Genevan version. Convenient in size, moderate in price, printed in roman type, and divided into verses, clothed with the prestige of the names of Calvin and Beza, fragrant, for many, with pathetic memories, as good a translation as the best learning of the age could produce, the Genevan or Puritan Bible rose rapidly into favor, and became the home Bible of England and Scotland until, after a protracted rivalry, it was superseded by the King's Bible of 1611.

This latter has won its place by its irresistible superiority. Its scholarship marked a conspicuous advance even on that of Geneva. It was free from bias, and did not provoke opposition by any polemical notes. The character of its diction was in full harmony with the key-note which Wycliffe had been the first to sound, and which Tyndale had re-echoed. Its English was the people's English, yet reflecting at the same time all the glow and glory of a period never surpassed in the whole history of letters. Receiving the jewel committed to them with a deep sense of devout responsibility, King James's revisers provided for it a setting of imperishable beauty. In strength and tenderness, in its sustained note of nobility and solemnity, in its wondrous pathos, in its chastened sobriety, simplicity, and directness, in the semblance of inevitableness under which the elaborate art of it lies concealed, in its haunting cadences and rhythms, the richness and power and grandeur of our native tongue have been enshrined for evermore. In other respects our debt to King James may not be great, but in the history of the English Bible he stands out as the energetic, sagacious, and wide-minded promoter of an enterprise not unworthy of the nation.